

Letting Go of Music

How to Stop Listening to Music as a Muslim

Words of Allah

Words of Devil

01:10

04:10



A gentle guide for Muslims who want to give up music for the sake of Allah with tips, reflections, and encouragement to make the journey easier.

By Shajjia Iftikhar

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While I strive to ensure that all Islamic references are accurate and in accordance with authentic sources, I encourage readers to verify and consult qualified scholars for religious rulings.

This resource is not a substitute for professional advice (religious, medical, or otherwise).

Author's Note

Music is everywhere... in shops, on the streets, online. For many Muslims, letting go of it feels almost impossible.

I wrote this book as a practical, honest, and faith-driven guide to help you take the first step toward replacing music with something far better, **remembrance of Allah**.

Whether you're just curious or fully committed, I pray this guide benefits you and brings you closer to peace and contentment.

Shajjia Iftikhar

My Story

A few years ago, I came across a sentence that stayed with me:

“Music and Quran cannot stay together in a heart.”

That one line shifted something in me. I began to realize that if I truly wanted the Quran to live in my heart, I had to make space for it and that meant letting go of music.

For some people, quitting music is instant. But for most of us, it's not that easy. It's a journey filled with struggles, setbacks, and small victories. At that point in my life, music was almost an addiction. I listened to it for hours daily. I had albums downloaded on my phone so I could access them even without internet. It was always within reach.

When I first tried to stop, my willpower wasn't strong enough. The intention was there, but deep down, I wasn't ready. I didn't even research why music is considered haram because I already knew it was something that didn't align with my faith. I didn't need proof or fatwas. I could feel the effect it had on me.

There was always a song playing in my mind. During prayer, while working, or even sitting quietly, it was never silent inside me. Songs would echo, and I couldn't focus in salah. I was wasting so much time and attention.

If you're reading this and feel the same way, like you've tried to quit but keep slipping, I want you to know: you're not alone. This eBook is here to help you with practical tips, spiritual motivation, and gentle encouragement for your journey.

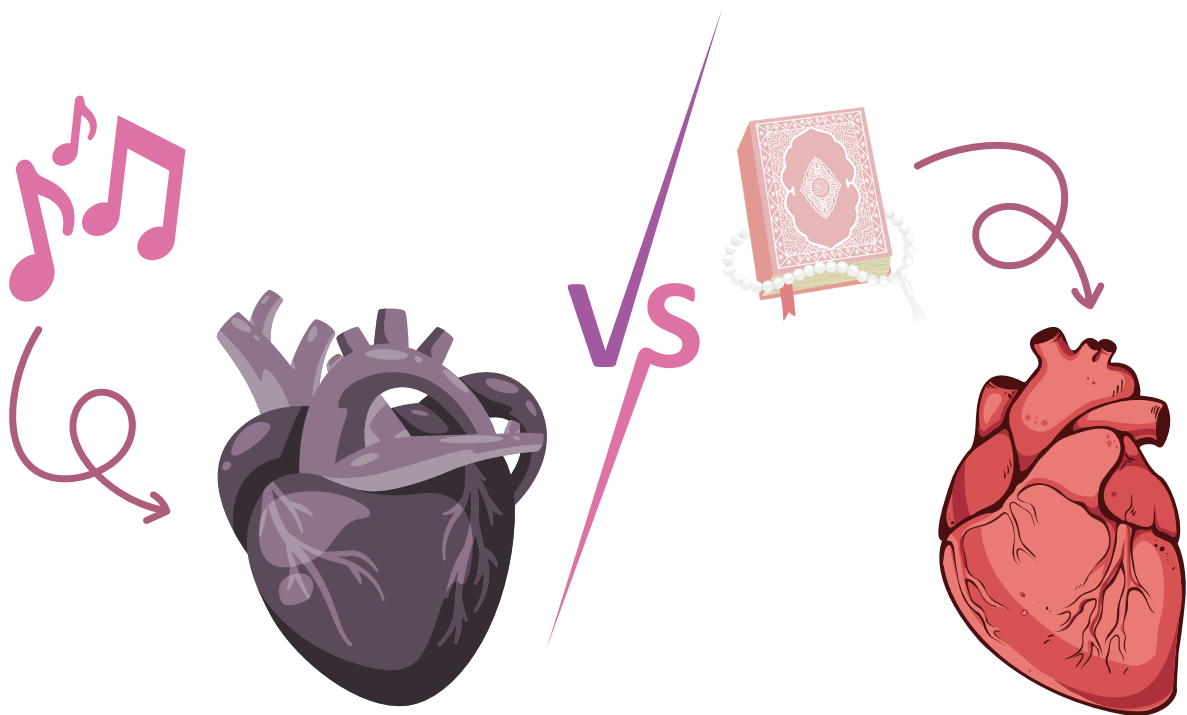


Music and the Quran Cannot Coexist in One Heart

Just as water and oil do not mix, the words of Allah and the words of Shaytan cannot share the same space in our hearts.

Let that thought stay with you. Make it your reminder. Write it down. Print it. Make it your phone wallpaper.

Your heart is a sacred space. Don't allow music to take up the space that was meant for the words of Allah.



Quran

- Soothes the heart
- Heals the soul
- Connects you to Allah
- Increases barakah in time and life
- Encourages reflection and peace
- Softens the heart to guidance
- A light in your darkest moments
- Brings tranquility in silence
- Fills your home with angels
- The words of the Most Merciful

Music

- Distracts the heart
- Numbs the soul
- Pulls you toward dunya
- Steals your time and focus
- Encourages heedlessness and emotion-driven choices
- Hardens the heart to truth
- A noise that echoes emptiness
- Makes silence unbearable
- Welcomes Shaytan into your space
- The whispers of the deceiver, dressed in rhythm

Is It a Habit or an Addiction?

Before you move forward, pause and reflect... Ask yourself am I addicted to music or if it's just a habit?

The table below explains the difference between habit and addiction, go through it and identify whether you are addicted to music or just slightly used to it.

Aspect	Habit	Addiction
Frequency	Regular, but not obsessive	Constant or compulsive listening
Control	You can stop or skip when needed	You feel you <i>can't</i> stop even when you want to
Emotional Attachment	You enjoy it, but aren't emotionally dependent	You <i>need</i> it to feel better or escape discomfort
Spiritual Interference	Might slightly affect prayer or focus	Strongly disrupts connection with prayer, Quran, or peace
Triggers	Often tied to routine (e.g. while working)	Tied to emotional states (e.g. stress, sadness)
Withdrawal Symptoms	You miss it but can move on	You feel irritated, restless, or down without it
Relapse Patterns	Easy to bounce back after stopping	Frequent relapses, feeling defeated or guilty
Focus in Salah/Quran	Slight distraction	Lyrics or music playing vividly in the mind

If it's just a habitual thing, it will be easy to move away from it and if it's an addiction it will take a little more time and effort but it's still doable.



Habits Can't Be Removed —Only Replaced

“You can't extinguish a bad habit, you can only change it.”

— Charles Duhigg, The Power of Habit

If you try to stop music without replacing it, you'll leave a void. That empty space will beg to be filled. If you don't fill it with something beneficial, music will creep back in.

Replacement Ideas:

- Quran recitations (try different Reciters)
- Uplifting Islamic podcasts
- Nature sounds (rain, ocean, forest)
- Motivational talks or reminders
- Audio books

YouTube and Muslim Central app for podcasts, lectures, talks and reminders.

YouTube and Quran Central app for Quran recitations



How to Break the Habit: A Proven Framework

HOW TO BREAK A BAD HABIT

Inversion of the 1st Law	Make It Invisible
1.5	Reduce exposure. Remove the cues of your bad habits from your environment.
Inversion of the 2nd Law	Make It Unattractive
2.4	Reframe your mindset. Highlight the benefits of avoiding your bad habits.
Inversion of the 3rd Law	Make It Difficult
3.6	Increase friction. Increase the number of steps between you and your bad habits.
3.7	Use a commitment device. Restrict your future choices to the ones that benefit you.
Inversion of the 4th Law	Make It Unsatisfying
4.5	Get an accountability partner. Ask someone to watch your behavior.
4.6	Create a habit contract. Make the costs of your bad habits public and painful.

Source: Atomic Habits by James Clear

In his book Atomic Habits, James Clear breaks down how habits are formed and how we can build good habits and break bad ones. It's a valuable read if you're looking to build lasting change in your life. I'll also include links to this and other helpful resources at the end of the book.

James Clear also mentioned the importance of creating systems for your goals which we will look into next.

Focus on Systems, Not Just Goals

A goal gives you direction. A system builds the path.

We often set goals hoping they'll change our lives: "I want to wake up early," "I want to eat healthier," "I want to stop wasting time." But goals alone don't create change. What matters more is the system you build around them.

Instead of focusing only on the outcome, think about what daily actions will make that outcome inevitable.

- Want to wake up earlier? Create a nighttime routine that helps you wind down.
- Want to eat healthier? Plan and prep your meals in advance.
- Want to stop wasting time? Identify your biggest distractions and replace them with meaningful alternatives.

Systems are what turn your intention into reality.

Here's how you can apply this to stop listening to music

You can't rely on willpower alone. You have to remove the temptation:

- Delete all music files from your phone or computer
- Cancel or uninstall apps like Spotify or YouTube Music
- Unfollow music creators or influencers promoting it
- Disable music-based recommendations on your apps
- Mute autoplay sounds on Reels, Shorts, TikToks

Replace music files with Quran and other ideas mentioned previously

*Quran brings tranquility
to restless hearts.*

01:10



04:10



*Music stirs restlessness
in tranquil hearts.*

Identify and Remove Triggers

Music is everywhere... In malls, cafes, social media, and even Muslim influencers' content. You have to protect your ears and heart.

Here's how to minimize triggers:

- Mute sound while scrolling social platforms
- Avoid background-music-heavy content
- Unfollow pages that regularly use music
- Remove music from your own content to avoid ongoing sin (gunnah-e-jariya)
- Let people around you know that you avoid music (in a subtle way, don't be rude so that you can inspire others as well)
- If it's possible, leave the place where there is music
- Respectfully deny invitations to occasions where music will be played
- Carry a pair of earphones with you so you can put on some white noise, podcast etc. when there;s no escape.

Avoiding triggers might feel difficult in the beginning, especially when music is so deeply embedded in our surroundings... from social media to cafes, weddings, and even commercials. But over time, your resistance will grow stronger. It will not be easy to ignore or minimize these triggers, but I promise you, after being on this journey and constantly trying to get away from music, you will be able to completely ignore it even when it's playing in the background. Talking from experience.

The key is consistency, sincere intention, and surrounding yourself with better alternatives that help you stay firm.

The Power of Dua and Istighfar

The moment you decide to give up music, do this:

- Thank Allah for guiding you
- Make your intention purely for His sake
- Pray 2 Rakahs and ask for ease in this journey
- Sit quietly for 5 minutes and do Istighfar with reflection

Ask forgiveness for:

- The times you listened to music
- The times it distracted you from Salah
- The moments you chose lyrics over ayahs
- The hours you spent away from Allah's remembrance

Dua is a believer's biggest weapon. Never underestimate the power of a sincere Dua.

It was reported that Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the closest Companions of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah Be Upon Him), said: "I am not worried about whether my dua will be responded to, but rather I am worried about whether I will be able to make dua or not. So if I have been guided (by Allah) then (I know) that the response will come with it)."



Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "If anyone constantly seeks pardon (from Allah), Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide sustenance for him from where he expects not."

[Abu Dawud].

Riyad as-Salihin 1873

This Is Your Hijrah

In the time we live in, leaving something for the sake of Allah is considered **Hijrah**.

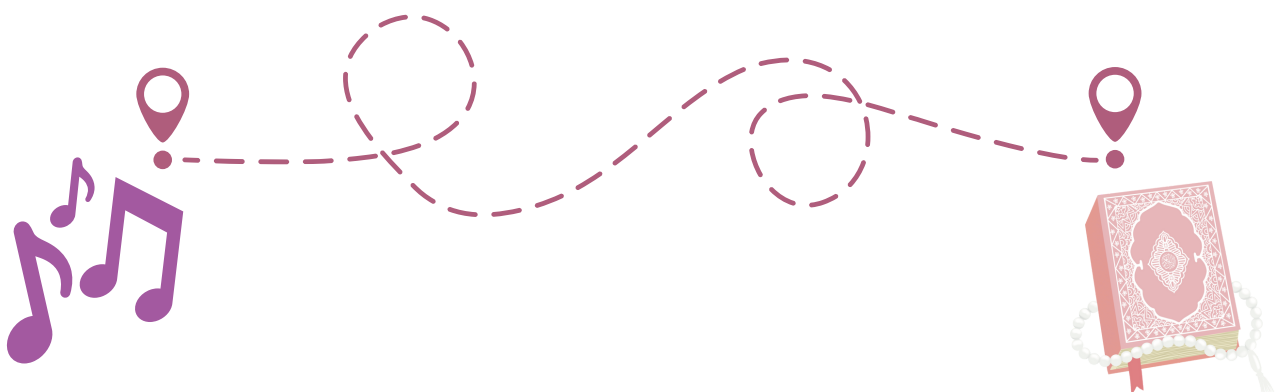
You are a **Muhajir**: someone making a conscious journey towards Allah away from sins. The rewards are immense, and the struggle is witnessed by your Lord.

Never belittle what you are doing. Allah sees every step.

This path is not going to be easy, it will be full of distractions, temptations, failures and setbacks.

The harder the path, the greater the reward waiting at the end.

You're not just quitting something harmful, you're choosing something far better.



*“Whoever leaves
something for the
sake of Allah, He will
replace it with
something better.”*

(Ahmad)

Don't Compare Your Journey

You may know someone who quit instantly and never went back. That's their journey not yours. Don't feel discouraged. Your journey will look different. And that's okay.

For me it was a journey of constant ups and downs. From not being able to delete a single song to finally having no songs in my phone and no accounts on music apps, I have come a long way.

If I can, you can too!

All the progress I have made was not instant, it took me years and a lot of relapses to come this far. From listening to music every single day for multiple hours to relapsing only once or twice a month... I have noticed a huge difference in me. And it would not have been possible if I gave up few years ago when I was relapsing 10 times a month (maybe more, see you are not alone).

You have no idea how many times I relapsed, redownloaded songs, reinstalled music apps on my phone, realized I am relapsing again, renewed my intention, deleted everything again, made progress and boom again relapsed. This kept on going a million times over and over again over the past few years and every time I thought I am not making progress, I was wrong. Progress was happening but it wasn't loud. I couldn't see it until after many failed attempts I started to notice very small tiny improvements.

The key is to never give up!

Be Realistic About the Time It Takes

If you've been listening to music for years, don't expect to quit overnight. You've been reinforcing that habit for a long time, so it will take time to rewire your mind. And that's okay.

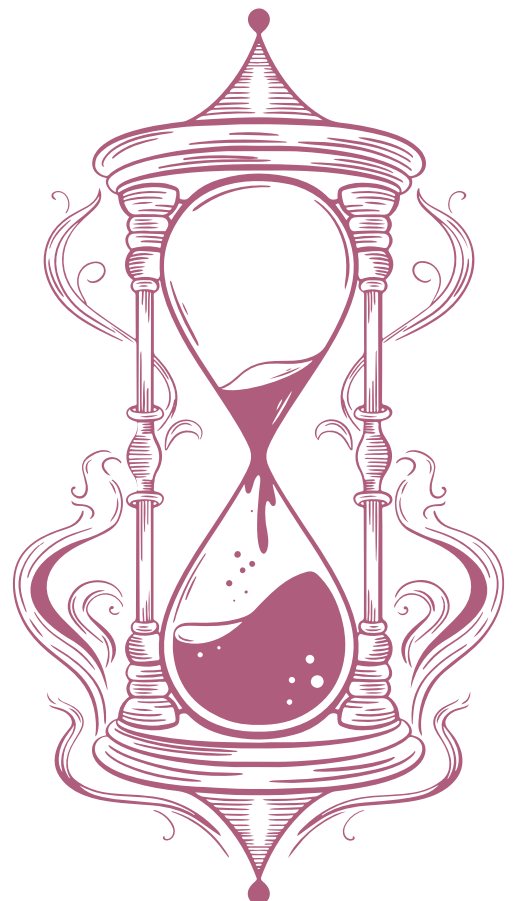
Progress is still progress, even if it's slow.

As I told you earlier, it can take years for you to minimize music in your life and it's a life-long journey. As long as you are alive, you will have to fight this battle, there will always be a possibility of relapse, there will be triggers and temptations and you will have to fight back till the end of your life.

The trick is to **never give up!** If you fail, get back up. All of these failures will teach you a lot if your truly notice.

Learn to learn from your failures.

With every relapse you will know what triggered you, what made you mess up, what were your weak points while the relapse was happening etc... Observe these things and try to solve these problems.



*Quran heals wounds you
didn't know you
had.*

01:10



04:10



*Music numbs pain but
never cures it.*

Notice Small Changes After Every Relapse

Most of the time it's not too visible but there are small improvements after every relapse. When you relapse and get back up, there's some change in you. It might not be too visible most of the times but trust me there are improvements happening in the background.

After many tries I finally started to notice some small changes in my love for music (it feels weird so say this because I hate music now).

- The first thing I noticed was that after having many relapses and getting back up, it was easier for me to get out of the relapse and try again.
- Another thing I noticed was that I slowly started to hate music. I was not enjoying it anymore.
- After a few years, I started to feel uneasy after listening to music. Every time there was music playing out loud, I would feel restless. When I first noticed this feeling, that was when I knew all this effort was worth it. I was not failing, I was slowly moving away.

Noticing small changes will motivate you and inspire you to keep going.

You Die the Way You Lived

*"Everyone will be resurrected in the condition in which he died."
— Sahih Muslim 2878*

If music was always playing in the background of your life through joy, sorrow, loneliness, or boredom, ask yourself:

What will be on your tongue and in your heart when your soul is taken?

- If your ears were filled with lyrics instead of the Qur'an...
- If your heart found comfort in melodies instead of dhikr...
- If you spent your time memorizing songs instead of the words of Allah...

How can you expect the words of Allah to be your last words?

There are so many stories of people who died while listening to music, who spent their whole life listening to music and refused to say Shahada before dying. Listen to these stories and your heart will definitely change.

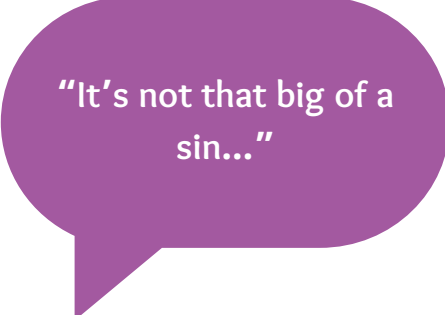
There's a series on YouTube that I recently came across named "Stories of the Dead People" on "One Islam Production's" YouTube Channel. I recommend this series to everyone. It's so scary and inspiring at the same time. If you listen to this series, I am pretty sure it will become easier for you to leave everything that displeases Allah. We all want a good end but to achieve that we must live a good life.

*Your daily habits
shape your final
moment, what are
you preparing for?*

Beware of The Tricks of Shaytan

The moment you decide to quit music, shaytan will start to perform his tricks on you. He doesn't want you to quit music, after all music is one of the biggest tools of shaytan to distract people from the path of Allah and to make people fall in sins. He will work really hard to your mind with whispers, doubts, and subtle justifications.


Here are some of the common whispers shaytan might use to try and stop you from quitting music and the truth you need to remember in response:



"It's not that big of a sin..."

Shaytan will try to minimize the seriousness of music, making you feel like it's not worth quitting over.

Music hardens the heart and distracts you from dhikr and Qur'an. The real harm isn't always obvious but it slowly chips away at your connection with Allah.



"You can just listen to 'clean' or instrumental music."

He'll tempt you to hold on by switching to what seems more "halal."

Even without lyrics, music still fuels attachment to dunya and emotional dependency. It's not only about words, it's about what your heart is turning to for comfort and escape.

"You've already listened for years, quitting now won't make a difference."

He'll make you feel like it's too late or that change is pointless.

No step toward Allah is ever wasted. One moment of sincere repentance can erase years of mistakes. Don't let your past hold your future hostage.

"You'll get bored without it."

He'll convince you that chores, walks, or silence will become unbearable.

Yes, the silence might feel strange at first but over time, you'll discover peace in dhikr, the Qur'an, podcasts, nature, or even simply your own thoughts. What once felt empty will start to feel whole.

"Everyone listens to music...don't be extreme."

He'll make you fear being different, isolated, or judged.

Islam was never meant to blend in. The Prophet ﷺ and the sahabah stood apart from their society. What matters isn't the crowd, it's the One you're trying to please.

"You're not strong enough to quit. You always go back."

Shaytan loves to whisper hopelessness after every slip.

Relapsing doesn't mean you're a failure. Giving up does. Keep repenting, keep trying. Even the struggle itself is beloved to Allah.

"You need music to focus, relax, or cope."

He'll whisper that music is your only source of emotional stability or productivity.

Music numbs you, dhikr heals you. Replace your coping mechanism with one that truly soothes your soul. You don't need distraction, you need peace. And peace comes from the remembrance of Allah:

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Qur'an 13:28)

Every time you fight a whisper and choose Allah instead, you're strengthening your soul. You may not feel it right away but your heart is being purified, bit by bit. Shaitan fears that. That's why he whispers.

You're not alone in this journey. And you are stronger than every excuse he throws at you because you have Allah on your side.

Defeat Shaytan at His Own Game

Shaytan wants you to sin, that's his mission. But what if every time you slipped, you turned it into an opportunity to grow closer to Allah? Imagine turning every fall into a powerful comeback. That's how you defeat Shaytan at his own game.

Here's a powerful habit to build:

Every time you commit a sin or miss a prayer, make it a rule to follow it up with a good deed.

For example:

- Pray two Rakahs of sincere repentance.
- Give a set amount in charity.
- Spend 5–10 minutes in dhikr.
- Read a page from the Qur'an.

What happens then? Shaytan's plan backfires. His goal was to push you away from Allah but now, your sin has become a trigger for more ibadah and more connection with your Rabb.

There are even stories of people who made public commitments like:

- "Every time I miss Fajr, I'll donate 500 rupees in charity."
- "Every time I commit a sin, I'll pray 4 Rakahs of Nafl immediately."

Eventually, Shaytan stopped tempting them with that sin because every time they slipped, their rank with Allah increased. Shaytan doesn't want that.

You hold the power to flip Shaytan's whispers on their head. Turn sin into repentance. Turn laziness into action. And turn Shaytan's traps into stepping stones on your path to Jannah.

The Prophet ﷺ

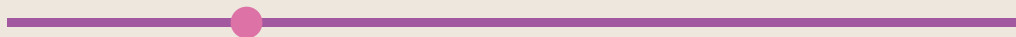
taught us:

*“Follow up a bad
deed with a good
deed and it will
erase it.”*

(Tirmidhi)

*Quran fills your soul with
light and clarity.*

01:10



04:10



*Music clouds your mind
with noise and
desire.*

Resources & Recommendations

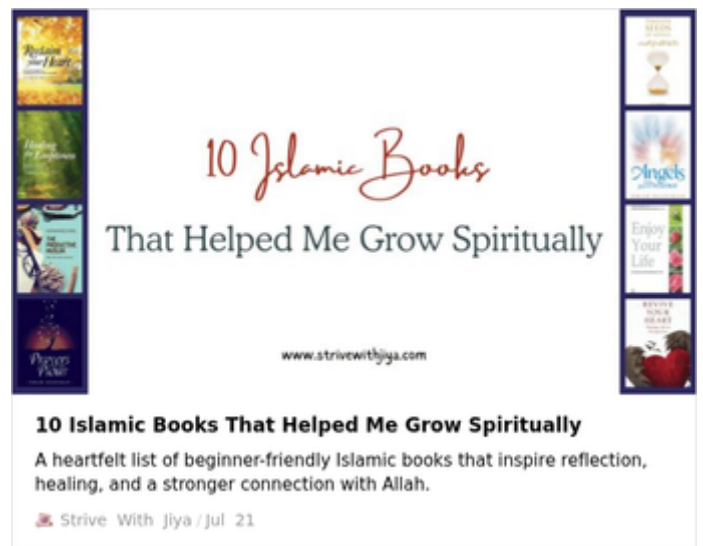
- Stories of the Dead by One Islam Production
- Atomic Habits by James Clear
- The Power of Habit by Charles Hughes
- Angels in Your Presence by Omar Suleiman
- Angels in Their Presence by Omar Suleiman
- Judgment Day: Deeds that Light the Way.
- Gems of Guidance

What's Next?

I am currently working on a digital+printable workbook/journal to help you practically apply what you've learned in this ebook. It will be published within the next week or two,

In *Sha Allah*. You'll receive an email notification as soon as it's released, so keep an eye on your inbox!

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